



Norwalk Economic Recovery Plan

2020-2021 Strategy to Combat Effects of COVID-19 on the City of Norwalk

The following pages contain information, resources, and plans to improve the following:

- I. Health and Well-being of Citizens*
- II. Impact on Local Businesses & Developments*
- III. Economic Impact on City budget*



City of Norwalk Economic Development Department

1104 Sunset Drive, Norwalk, Iowa 50211

norwalk.iowa.gov/econdev | norwalklocal.org

Health and Well-being of Citizens

The City of Norwalk cares first and foremost about the overall well-being of residents and those who are employed in the community. In order to provide the highest level of safety to all, City leaders took extra care and precaution when determining how and when to make public spaces available again. Mayor Phillip's latest emergency proclamation and information on reopening City facilities to the public is below. Following the proclamation you will find additional resources for employment related issues and health services.



Updated 05/15/2020

PROCLAMATION OF EMERGENCY COVID-19 (Coronavirus) State of Emergency

WHEREAS, Iowa Code Section 372.14(2) and the Norwalk City Code Chapter 15.02(2) grant the Mayor powers in emergency circumstances when public danger exists to take extraordinary steps to protect the public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor has authority to take command of the police and govern the City by proclamation, upon making a determination that a time of emergency or public danger exists. Within the City limits, the Mayor has all the powers conferred upon the Sheriff to suppress disorders; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor of the City of Norwalk does hereby find; That conditions of extreme peril to the safety of citizens and businesses has arisen within Norwalk, caused by COVID-19 (also known as Coronavirus); and

WHEREAS, across the globe, the disease has been dramatically spread through contact by those with no known correlation to any affected areas or without contact with those known to be infected, called "community spread" and the Iowa Department of Public Health ("IDPH") has now identified community spread in the Des Moines Metro area and has issued new recommendations for individuals with underlying conditions, and all Iowans should be prepared for cancellations and disruptions in routine activities; and

WHEREAS, a high rate of infection has been shown to overwhelm medical systems throughout the world and numerous governmental entities and epidemiologists have stated that community spread in the United States poses the same risk of overwhelming American medical systems. Based upon information from Governor Reynolds we know that the successful implementation of social distancing along with cooperation from businesses and citizens have reduced impacts on our medical systems in Iowa; and

WHEREAS, the IDPH continues to recommend mitigation measures to continue to slow the spread of the virus, including avoiding large gatherings of more than 10 people, and considering adjustments for smaller gatherings with high risk groups.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY PROCLAIMED that a local emergency now exists throughout Norwalk, and;

IT IS FURTHER PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED that during the existence of said local emergency the powers, functions, and duties of the emergency organization of this City shall be those prescribed by state law, by ordinances, and resolutions of this City, and; That this emergency proclamation shall continue until such time the Mayor either modifies the existing Proclamation of Emergency or declares an end to said emergency situation.

I hereby direct all departments of the City of Norwalk to take whatever steps necessary to protect life and property, public infrastructure, and provide such emergency assistance deemed necessary. Public access at City buildings will resume on May 18th. While City buildings may be open, we ask that citizens and those wishing to conduct business with the City do so via phone and or other electronic communication. For the protection of you and those around you, we also ask you to practice physical distancing and wear a mask while in City buildings.

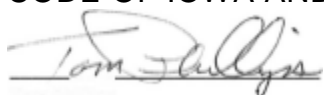
Based on Governor Reynold's current Public Health Proclamation, all playgrounds and shelters in City parks will remain closed. This closing includes all of McAninch Sports Complex and the Norwalk Aquatic Center. City programs will remain cancelled until further notice. Citizens are encouraged to practice physical distancing while in open areas of our City parks and trails to continue slowing the spread of the COVID-19 disease.

I further strongly suggest-consistent with the recommendations of the ID PH-that private gatherings of 10 or more people on private property should be avoided and appropriate adjustment for smaller gatherings with high risk groups should be made.

I also strongly encourage all vulnerable residents of Norwalk, including those with preexisting medical conditions and those older than 65, to continue to limit their activities outside of their home and minimize visits to businesses and limit their participation in gatherings of any size or purpose.

Finally, I recommend the usage of masks when you are likely to be in contact with others for more than a few minutes, especially if you are going to be with our more vulnerable population. Data shows the usage of masks not only protects others from contracting the virus from you, it also helps you from contracting the virus from others. Please help slow the spread of COVID-19, so our healthcare system can effectively manage those who get sick from this virus.

PROCLAIMED THIS 15TH DAY OF MAY, 2020 BY THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY THE CODE OF IOWA AND THE CITY OF NORWALK MUNICIPAL CODE:



Tom Phillips
Mayor, City of Norwalk

The City of Norwalk has also provided City Staff with specific guidelines and resources for health and safety measures when coming back to work at public facilities.

For Residents and Individuals Working in Norwalk:

[Health resources through the State of Iowa](#)

[Local health resources through Warren County](#)

Veterans Assistance

[Vets4Warriors.com](#)- (1-855-838-8255) is a peer connected counseling and support site with no cost and no time limits.

[DAV COVID Relief Program](#)- For any Veteran who lost their employment (to include self-employed contractors and small business owners).

[PenFed Foundation Military Heroes Fund](#)- For any Veteran who cannot pay rent, mortgage, auto loan/lease, or utilities. Payment up to \$1500.

Questions can always be asked on the HomeBase Norwalk Facebook Group, and Norwalk resident, and active duty member of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps, Cory Seidl is always available at 515-633-7665 or cseidl@norwalk.iowa.gov for direct assistance.

[Veterans Opportunities](#)



Impact on Local Businesses & Developments

Without our local businesses and employers, the City of Norwalk and the community as a whole would not function as it does. Our businesses provide employment, products, services, healthcare, and a valuable tax base that enables community services such as clean water, sewer, streets, public facilities, schools, and much more. It is critical to our local, state, and national economies that our businesses be able to operate at full capacity as soon as possible. The City of Norwalk is here to help our businesses in any way that we can.

In order to determine the scope of impact on our business community, the City sent out two separate surveys. One specifically requested employment information to gather a sampling of impacted and lost jobs due to COVID-19. The other survey was regarding the impact on businesses due to the pandemic. From this information we were able to develop a more tailored and comprehensive program to assist residents and businesses. www.Norwalk.Iowa.Gov/EconDev.

Below are brief recaps from the surveys. No confidential information was requested or shared.

Norwalk Employment Survey:

Based on the sampling of our population, thankfully in general the majority of the respondents are still employed or have a form of reliable income. Of the 353 total respondents, just under 80% were still employed. Of the approximately 20% unemployed, 75% said that it was due to the COVID pandemic. Of the individuals unemployed due to COVID, approximately half said they should have their jobs back in three months or less, 40% said it might take longer than three months, and 10% said their job loss was permanent. Thankfully approximately 84% of the total respondents said they have reliable sources of income not including unemployment. Of the remaining 16% without reliable sources of income, 12.7% of those have or plan to file for unemployment. The survey did not include questions about reduced hours or pay since we were primarily trying to determine the unemployment status of Norwalk residents due to COVID. Comments and questions included a wide variety with a pretty even split regarding opening up the economy/businesses too soon vs. not soon enough.

Full results here: <https://tinyurl.com/yaten965>

Norwalk Business Impact Survey:

Based on the sampling of Norwalk businesses, the majority of the respondents have been able to stay open during the COVID crisis, although many were forced to close, reduce hours, staff, and operation levels. Of the 24 businesses surveyed, 17 remained open, and 7 were forced to close. From these businesses a total of 144 employees have been laid off. All but two have seen significant decreases in weekly revenue with one business seeing an increase, and one remaining the same. Over 80% of the respondents still in operation have been able to receive supplies and goods, as well as ship or provide their goods/services. Of those still open, more than half have over 80% of their staff working remotely. 13 of the 24 respondents have applied for the Small Business Relief Grant (SBA) and 80% of those grants are pending or awarded. 16 of the 24 respondents applied for the Paycheck Protection Program and over 80% are pending or awarded. The most common requests from respondents were for technical assistance and employer best practices, followed by need for additional gap funding. In general, larger companies feel positively about bouncing back and maintaining their operations. Food production companies have seen significant decreases in portions of their businesses. Smaller businesses in the service categories are the hardest hit by the shut-down. All are worried about the shut-down lasting much longer, as well as the potential of another

*shut-down if the virus or other global/national crises arises within the next 12-24 months. Most were very grateful for the State and Federal assistance funds.
Full results included at end of document.*

In order to assist our businesses with their requests for technical support, employer and business best practices, and financial assistance/resources, we have aggregated the best information from multiple sources to include all variations of business and employer support, funding, resources, planning and recovery tools. Below are links to these sources including program details and applications.

Financial Assistance

The City of Norwalk has partnered with the Greater Des Moines Partnership, Warren County Economic Development, and the Norwalk Chamber to provide a '[Small Business Relief Grant](#)'. Application period ends May 20, 2020. DEADLINE EXTENDED! Applications due 11:59 P.M. May, 31.

The State and Federal Government also has many loan and grant programs available to businesses impact by COVID-19. Below are the links to the program details and applications:

<https://www.dsmpartnership.com/covid-19/small-business-resources#finance>

<https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/businessrecovery>

<https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/Business#Business%20Incentives>

Employer Resources

<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/business>

<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/employer-incentives>

<https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/business#Small%20Business%20Assistance>

Available Jobs

<https://www.iowaworks.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>

<http://www.norwalk.iowa.gov/cms/one.aspx?pagelid=7017769>

Employment programs

<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/programs-0>

<https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/business#Workforce>

Business Reopening and Growth Resources

<https://www.dsmpartnership.com/covid-19/dsm-forward>

<https://10ksbapply.com/iowa/about>

Developers and New Business Assistance

The City of Norwalk has several incentive programs available for businesses and new development. If you are considering building a new facility or development in Norwalk, looking to open business in Norwalk, or are a developer in the process of constructing a new development in Norwalk, we want to help you move your project forward in a timely and seamless manner. Please contact Hollie Zajicek, Economic Development Director with questions or issues you may be having and you will be connected with any available resources and appropriate departments to assist you.

HollieZ@Norwalk.Iowa.Gov, 515-314-5862.

[Norwalk Business Resources](#)

[Norwalk Incentive Programs](#)

Economic Impact on City Budget

The City is monitoring potential financial impacts related to COVID-19. At this time it is too early to accurately predict what financial impacts the City will experience. The City is proceeding with projects cautiously while we watch economic fluctuations.

Citizens and businesses should find comfort in knowing that Norwalk has established a healthy Reserve Fund Policy. This policy has resulted in at least 30% reserves. These reserves will allow the City to adapt to any major financial impacts caused by COVID-19.

Summary

The City of Norwalk's staff and elected officials will diligently monitor and address the effects of COVID on the community. We will continue working with local, state and national partners to develop, support, and deliver programs and resources that can help our residents, businesses, workforce, and visitors. City Departments will strive to provide efficient and expedited services to developers and businesses while working through the City processes of building and developing new facilities/projects, and opening new or expanding existing businesses in Norwalk. In order to help stabilize and grow the Norwalk economy, the Economic Development Department will put primary focus on existing business needs to keep them operating and their workers employed, while also aggressively assisting and promoting new developments and new company recruitment efforts.

Please continue checking the City website and Facebook page for updates, as well as the NorwalkLocal.Org site for aggregated community information (City, Chamber, School, and County). Feel free to contact the City at any time with questions, concerns, and assistance.

City Hall 705 North Avenue, Norwalk, Iowa 50211 | 515-981-0228 | www.Norwalk.Iowa.Gov | [Facebook](#)

Business Impact Survey Full Results:

Norwalk COVID-19 Business Impact Survey Results

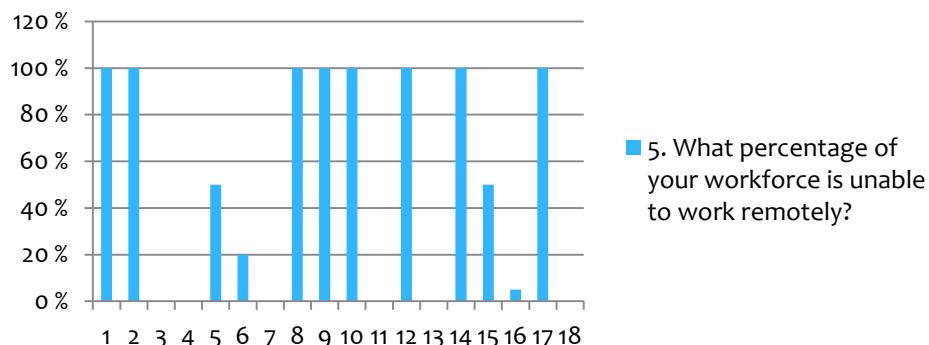
May, 2020

Summary

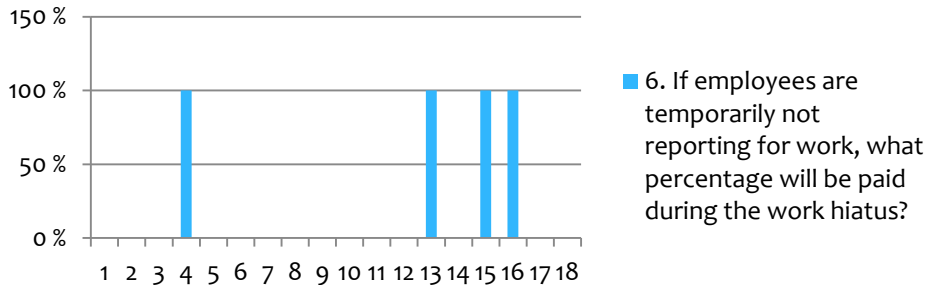
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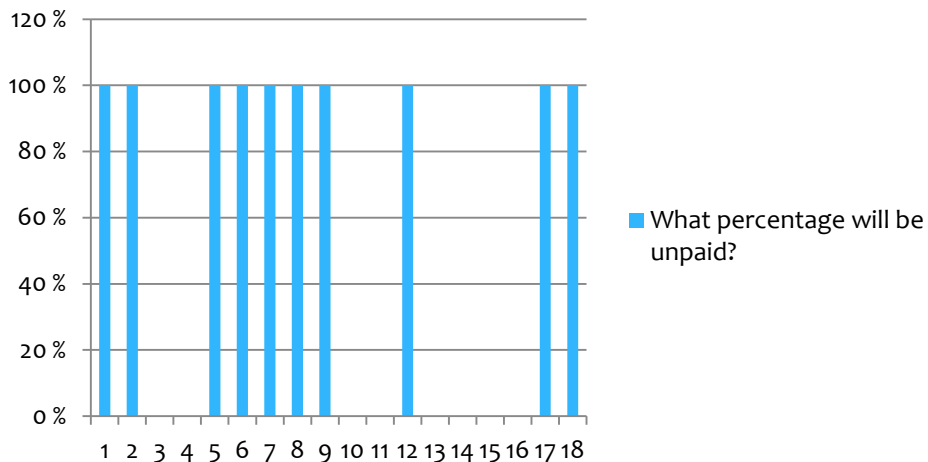
What percentage of your workforce is unable to work remotely?



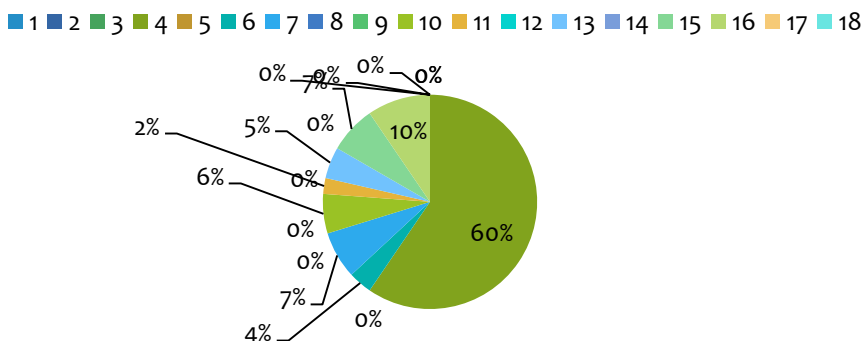
If employees are temporarily not reporting for work, what percentage will be paid during the work hiatus?



What percentage will be unpaid?

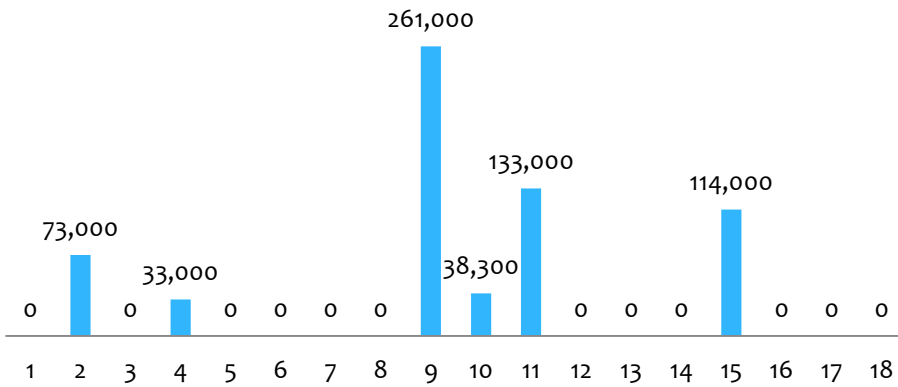


If any employees are paid, approximately how many weeks will they be compensated?



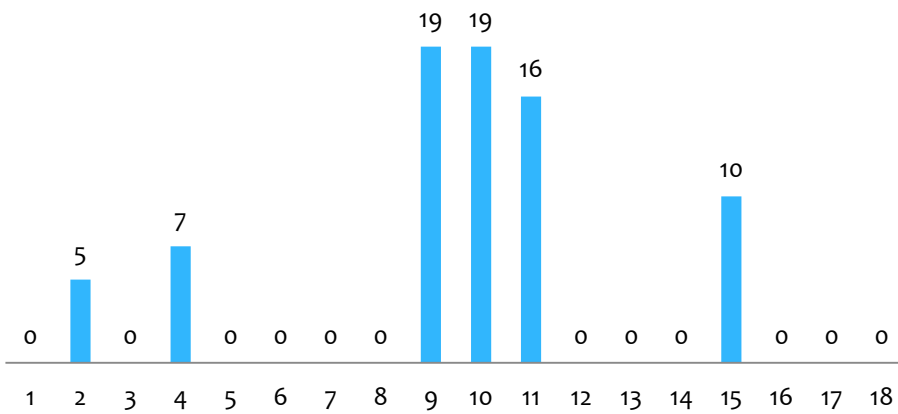
Amount of PPP grant?

■ Amount of PPP grant?



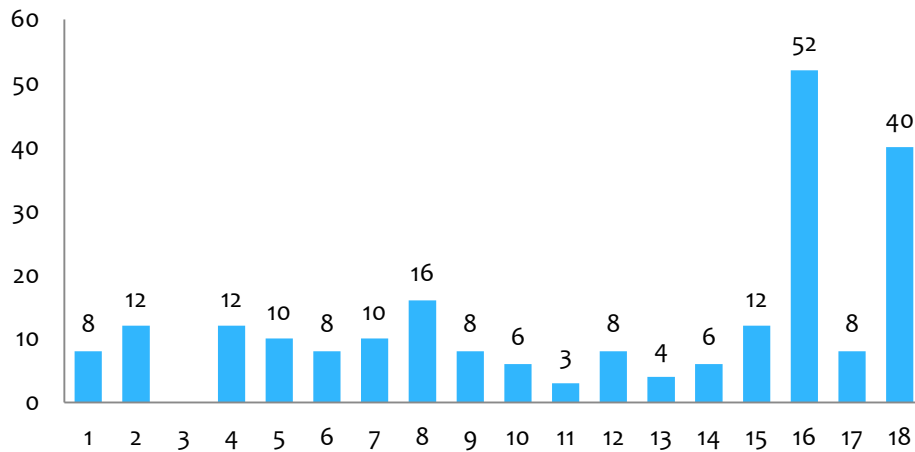
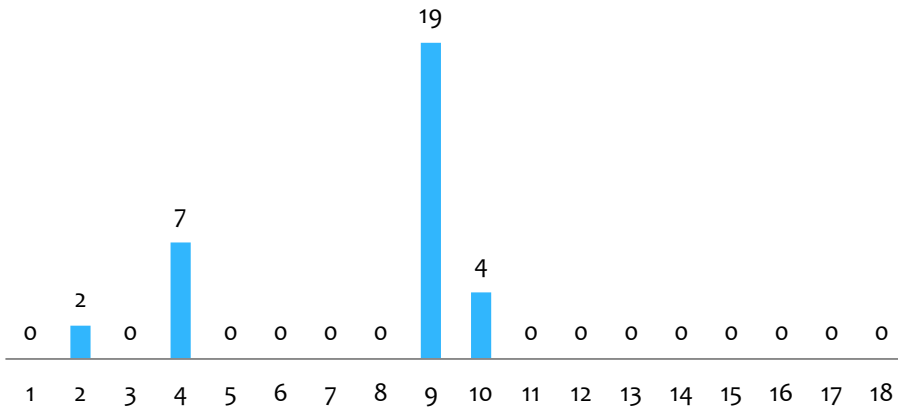
Number of employees retained?

■ Number of employees retained?



Number of employees rehired?

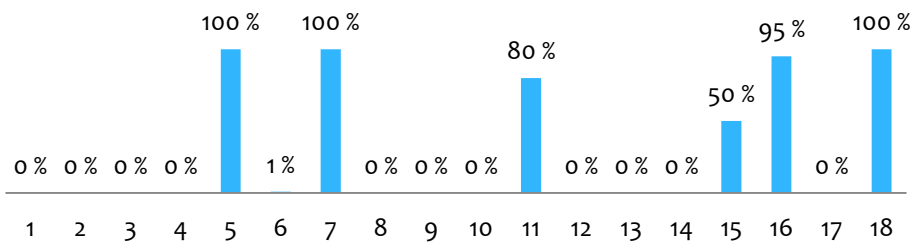
■ Number of employees rehired?



■ 13. How many more weeks of a business slow down or shutdown would you estimate your business could survive before closing?

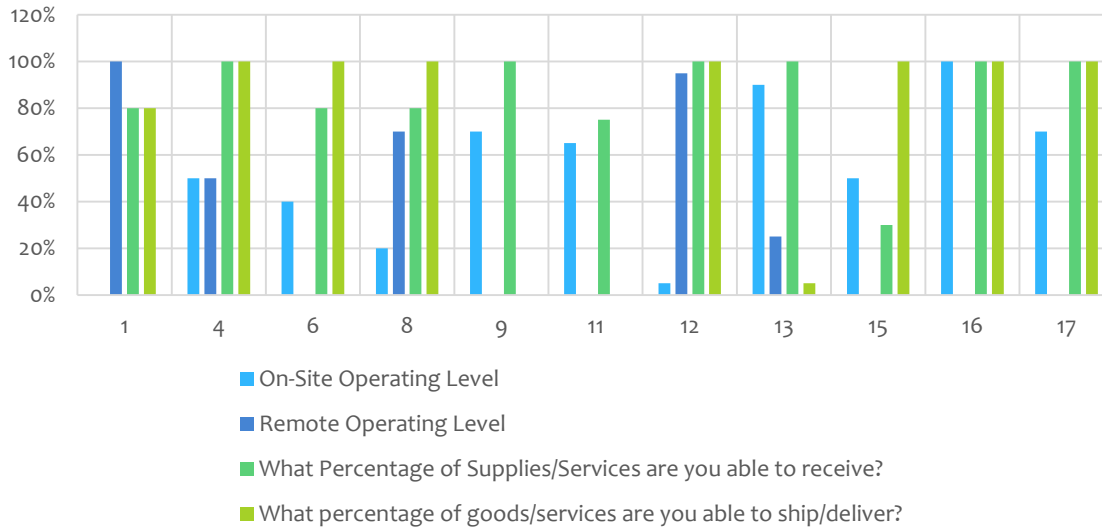
4. What percentage of your workforce is currently working remotely?

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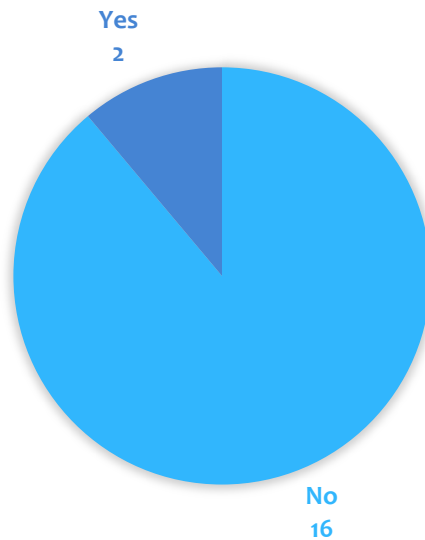


Operating Status

(Numbers omitted indicates 0%, closed business)

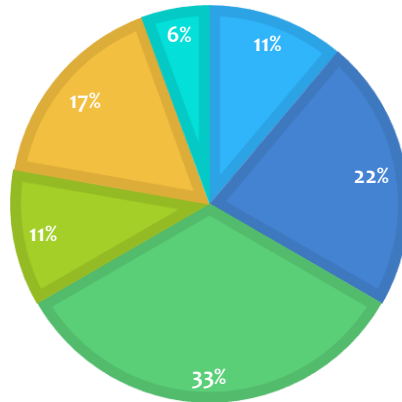


IS YOUR COMPANY PROVIDING TEMPORARY AID TO FURLOUGHED EMPLOYEES?



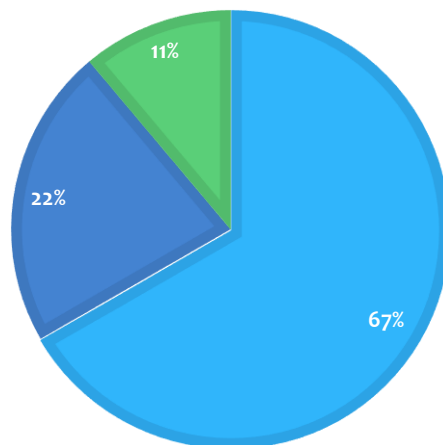
WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CONCERN FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES, BESIDES GENERAL HEALTH?

■ Fear of Illness ■ Job Security ■ Mental Health/Motivation
■ Available Positions ■ Providing Financially ■ Keeping Employees

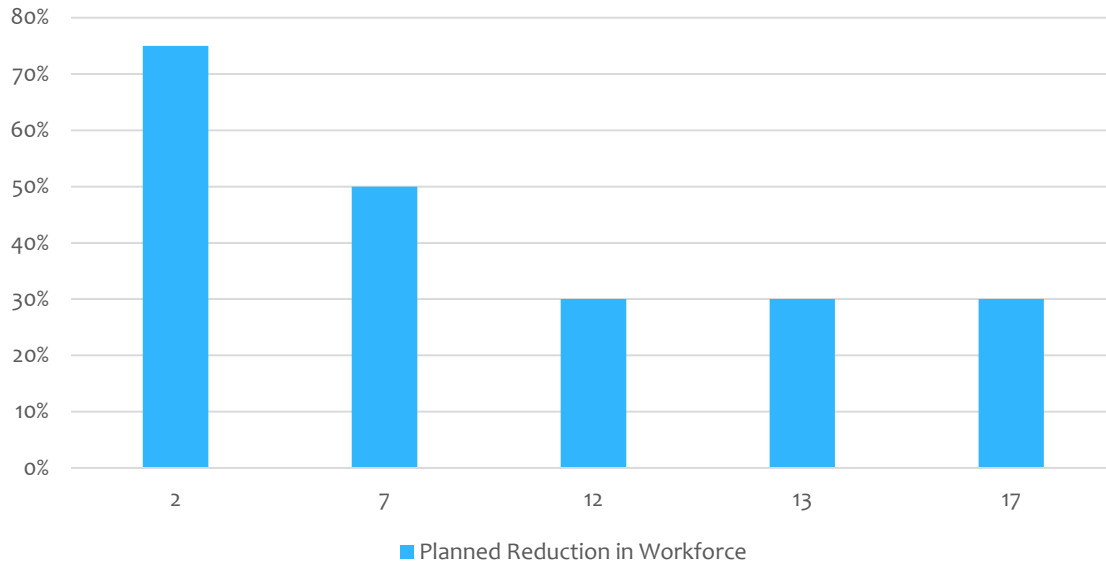


HAVE YOU CONTACTED YOUR BANK ABOUT A BRIDGE LOAN OR OTHER FINANCING?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Unnecessary

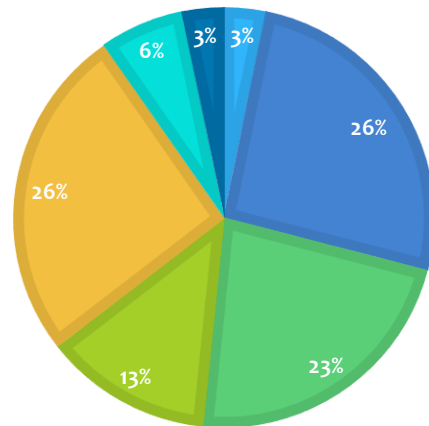


Planned Reduction in Workforce



WHAT BUSINESS SUPPORT(S) WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO YOUR COMPANY?

- Customers Following CDC Guidelines
- Technical Assistance
- Distribution of Other Employer's Best Practices
- Employee Resources
- Assistance Referrals
- Open Business
- Public Event Strategies



Simple Comments:

"Nervous to go back."

"We have to flatten the curve before we can go back."

"We are grateful for the community support we have been receiving."

"We love our city, and we really like the amount of support that we get from this community."

"You rock"

Complex Comments:

“As a self employed single member LLC, it seems as though we are being overlooked for many state and federal funding options. Any option that does apply, isn't much help, or is maxed out in just a few days. (EIDL, PPP, TSB) Unfortunately, with little to no confidence in their own future, businesses are not in a position to make future purchases like our LED lighting upgrades. This upgrade will save any business money, the investment usually pays itself off in 3 years or so. However, if a business is worried that it won't survive that long, they are unable to justify the investment. Basically anything that the Chamber can do to aid in the confidence of businesses would greatly help me, my family, my customers and their families.”

“We operate a venue in the event industry. We have a different income model - if we are unable to provide a service, then consumers expect a refund for the deposit they paid on a rental. Deposits made year or more ahead of time. Furthermore, we are unable to host events, so we also have zero income coming in with overhead. We are in the negative between not being able to host events, refunding money that was earned last year, not able to book events due to consumer uncertainty. Some events have been postponed to future dates - that would be otherwise viable options for a new booking. We are impacted well beyond 2020 and now impacting our 2021 rental calendar. I am not sure what would be beneficial to us, because of the unknown and consumers don't want to gamble with an event as important as their wedding. Consumers are also financially struggling and not in a position to book a venue for the future unknown. I am hopeful we can reopen in June and manage the fallout of 2020.”

